

# *The Journal*

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# *The Journal*

**Selected Poetry and Prose**  
**Curry College**

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## INTRODUCTION

This anthology is a reflection of creative literary interest at Curry. Input to The Journal varies each year, understandably, in accordance with the inhibitions of the closed door poets whose contributions make up this book. Sometimes the doors are locked and this makes the search difficult.

What we have gathered are the unlocked open door words of Curry. They do not always come easily, often not in overwhelming abundance. The anguish of the serious is regarded in the words of Lawrence Durrell's character Darley in *Balthazar*. He states: "I write so slowly, with such pain ... landlocked in spirit as all writers are ... like a ship in a bottle sailing nowhere."

Our interest does not lie solely among the serious ... My only thanks go to the contributors this year, serious or simply sensitive, whose open door words are all we have.

John DeJesu

*Poetry*

## To A. D. Winans

Who said: "...wishing  
i had been blessed with  
the skills of a union carpenter instead  
of these heavy words locked away inside  
these aging brain cells..."

*Beware poets who wish they were carpenters,  
Who rant about the itch  
They have to scratch  
As if it cursed them  
Like a wine-red birthmark.*

*Who needs poets who wish they were  
carpenters?  
Better if they  
Tacked their eyes shut,  
Plugged their mouths with quicklime,  
jammed fingers in their ears.*

*Poets who wish they were carpenters  
Bungle the joints of their lines,  
Throw bad words after bad  
And think it's fine,  
They've escaped success...and carpentry.*

*Bill Littlefield*

## Poem to my Father

*My old man*

*Courted death along the highway in his head,  
Felt the sing and snap  
Of a bloodline wired tight around a quick end.*

*Stacked stood relics,  
Easy courage and a tough hide,  
No longer pertinent to the chore.*

*Time told him no secrets,  
Love nursed him no wounds,  
Death danced him on his tightrope.*

*Feeling and the thaw came hard.  
Each channel sliced  
Knives through ice,  
And everything he had he earned and earned.*

Bill Littlefield

## Out Mary's Window

*There's symbol out this window  
No one would credit.*

*In a late, gray, December wind,  
Stubborn leaves, a bare cluster,  
Cling to a stripped branch -*

*While one tree on  
The hulking mass, huge section of tree,  
Has bown down dead.*

*The leaves rattle;  
The sharp, white spikes of the break  
Reach up in blind, unregarded rage.*

Bill Littlefield

*By fences splintered, gray, on Canaan road's corner*

*Where tall rash grass pouts, and April smirks,  
The hat lies by the spidered milkbottle -  
The earth damp khaki hat.  
Across the lane the father breaks the stones  
And rakes the broken branches  
Upturning unfastened moss.  
The mother strings the line and picks the  
pebbles*

*From the frail grass folded like puppies ears,  
And the young boy earnestly builds the mud dam  
He will soon tire off for wrinkled chilly hands.*

*The hat: solace for eggs, pods and ground life  
thick,  
Sits sunk like a cloth-rot bowl where once a boot  
stepped.  
The father works till breezes startle his naked  
chest,  
Working longer than younger men, hoeing more,  
Clipping and cutting shutes, throwing more seed  
On dark, chip cleaned, root yanked, breathing  
earth.*

*The mother brings in the flapping sheets,  
The striking, varying shirts with nothing between  
Them but a narrow line.  
She looks down at the child across the road  
probing;*

*Smiling, she sees him grown,  
Then swaying, then still, she grabs the wire,  
And thanks that the clothes aren't dry,  
Not dry, unlike the space's boxed, mothy jerseys,  
Too young for all, she says,  
And thanks the dazed, seeming spring eternity.*

*The boy across the way steps on the hat,  
Recoils, draws back, then looks down,  
And sees the too fast flash, a jaunty tip, a  
brother's cock,*

*Stirred, he thinks of a voice,  
The moving past indwelling,  
The brother's voice little and special  
Like his own image behind each color,  
That failing, lingers, lying mud streaked,  
With a deceiving aged smear*

*Empty on the ground.  
The boy stays longer, and answers not  
His mother's resigned and baffling call.*

## The Woodcutter

*He had run from the gaping statue  
Whose dry mouth opened cold,  
Whose stony, strident song condemned  
his fair wild songs.*

*He sees her clenched lip  
Above his struggling head.  
The guilt-edged goal: that he must see  
is flagrant past as the noxious old factory  
Of the soul, a green fume odium's above  
The enduring, unwitting wife  
Who looks up, sees not cumulus sins,*

*He lies unmoving in a feverish qualm -  
The wife sewing beside him.  
The statue comes and spreads chalk fingers  
To drive the abeyant song  
In agony through the bellows.*

*The weakness shrouds him, muscles sag;  
The samson secret uprooted.  
He sees his journeys lewd through nights  
To fuel the brothel's hungry stoves,  
Replenishing all from wood long borne  
From his forest of labour.  
Returning late from bawdy trenches  
Then back to her, forsaken wife*

R. R. Pauley, Jr.

*Now silent - to loneliness wed  
Now restive, he is wound in wife washed quilts.*

*At bed's end lurks the saintly fury  
Who extracts the faithless past  
Though noiseless to the working wife,  
To her slaving, he slaves, unaroused...*

*Tall locusts haunt him,  
Taunt him with their lambent spires:  
The past, the rich and flowing past!  
Indifferent to her pleading  
He crawls to the tool weary shed,  
Limp-white, he seeks a surge,  
At last, the blade, the plundering urge.  
He stumbles to the white piled deep,  
The poised axe finely cocked.*

*He hurls the wooden shaft,  
And hushed it falls to a blade shaped grave.  
Now swaying,  
Swaying, the man with the cutter's pride,  
Anguished in the land of his addictions,  
With trees he used to sunder wide,  
Now fails.*

R. R. Pauley, Jr.

## Tyro, Enipeus, Poseidon

*Is Tyro maid, mistreated down the steps  
That turns wistful to refuge river's shore  
Where she can lay her burdened heart before  
The god who floats on tears she long has wept;  
Though prone, he soon has mourned himself  
bereft  
Until more virile god disguised in lore  
Whose passion shudders deep in ocean's core -  
From god to god, great to less, he has lept -  
Rising immense while bare she looks askance;  
Consummate wave that pounds its foam flecked  
chest:  
Poseidon's curling lust and vital dance  
Whose swirling weeds on evanescent crest  
Froth and seep like some warming liquid lance -  
Then harm forgot, with joyous sighs they rest.*

R. R. Pauley, Jr.

## Too Young

*She's too young.  
Had to grow up  
Too fast  
Too soon;  
How sad, I feel for her.  
Too young.  
Time's on her side,  
But the odds  
Are stacked against her.  
So sad,  
She's so damn young.*

Ed Goulart

## Confessions upon Awakening

*In bed  
alone,  
free from close together  
thoughts,  
stretching egg stained sheets taught  
over head  
as stormy clouds pelt slackless linen  
with unending hale drops,  
bounding torrent from apex toe  
to skull cap's peak.*

*Creamy flesh  
stark  
under soft-white asylum.  
Alone still,  
inside luminous  
sheet tent  
curled tightly,  
knees to chin  
clinging to childish giggles isolated,  
uncontrolled.*

*Rain diminishes to splotchy whimper.  
Abundant drops  
wet on forehead  
as sanctuary collapses  
in sunny morning  
emergence.  
No storm.  
No fetal-like warmth.  
No isolation.  
Only hollow walls  
reaching high  
above  
and dirty sheets around my legs.*

John DeJESU

## “Why?”

*I try to fly,  
You hold me down.*

*Why?*

*You don't hear me talking,  
You don't try.  
There's nothing wrong about the fact that  
We don't think the same.  
I don't ask that you follow me*

*But why stand in my way?*

*Ed Goulart*

## Philosophy of Depression

*Such has been my life:  
Happiness found in brief rays of sunshine  
filling my soul,  
But always sadness returns, and come the  
clouds of sorrow.  
The clouds are safe and dark,  
I've come to want and need them.  
Love hurts,  
But sorrow only lingers,  
And grows to mean nothing...  
with time!*

*Ed Goulart*

## City Sleeps

*At six o'clock the streets of Boston empty.  
The darkness heaves its breathless sigh, and  
seeps  
Through shaded alleys - sunless now and grey.  
The night falls - soothing store fronts, blanketed  
From busy trickling crowds of passers-by.  
The blackness settles under glowing streetlights;  
On concrete curb stones; sidewalks stretch -  
unused.  
The docks embrace the huddled swan boats.  
The city rests. It slumbers languid, quiet  
Hummed to sleep by whispering vagrant cars.*

*K. L. Hunter*

## Preference

*Give me  
The ravenous tongues of flame  
who feed on flesh  
of once proud trees -  
For I have heard sadistic Winter's breath  
as it roughly fondled me  
with icy laughter.  
The Fire's feast  
offers passionate and benevolent  
warmth.*

*K. L. Hunter*

## Nostalgia's Cup

*Park Street lies cold.  
Once busy shops lean dark, bolted shut;  
The street lights perform for few.*

*A cafe is dimly lit,  
And inside he slurps his coffee.  
His shabby coat hangs threadbare, grey, soiled  
Over his tired frame.*

*He mumbles -  
He chuckles,  
Conversing with his timeworn self.  
He dwells on finer hours -  
Of his woman, his children - gone.*

*He sits alone.  
His hoary eyes don't see  
The filthy cafe floor  
And coffee stained table tops.*

*He hears the whispers of his youth -  
Of Christmas morning tip toes on squeaking  
stairs,  
Of his silent joyful weeping on seeing his first  
newborn,  
Of all years past.*

*Then to his lips he brings the cup  
And sips again the taste of times elapsed.*

*K. L. Hunter*

## Soul Unsupported

*Now loneliness destroys  
The soul's fragile frame  
Held only in the willowy arms  
Of fading memories  
That cannot support desires.*

*It slips and falters further -  
And despairs.*

*The only rope cast down  
Through this fathomless state  
Is the outstretched hand -  
Beckoning to be held.*

*K. L. Hunter*

## In Years

*One's years don't have to show  
His have been kind to him  
As I rock alone, my eyes envy his brisk walk and  
erect body  
Which manifest confidence.  
He possesses fine grasping hands and stalwart  
face  
With a sharp mind still questioning -  
Questioning why his hands are wrinkled with toil  
and strife  
His face holds line of strength and wear  
White hair shows worry and concern  
A trembling voice whose words tend to forget,  
The pace slows down in his hesitant walk  
And his body is hunched with dignity  
He sits and stares; his eyes have seen life's  
pages.  
And show loneliness.  
I can grow old young - he grows old old  
A man is seen as his life is told.*

*Judie Packer*

# Untitled

*She is a part of the earth*

*She emerges from the soft brown soil  
slowly, methodically, to embrace the sun - so  
warm  
on her earth cooled body  
She shakes loose particles  
which cling  
and catch the light  
of the new morning  
without any adornment  
but that which the earth has given her  
fresh, unspoiled*

*She is darkness*

*Her eyes black like coal dug  
from the bowels of a mountain  
Her skin smooth and brown as  
an unmarred wild mushroom  
and hair -  
a sheet of dark gleaming silk  
untamed, loose and free*

*She is movement*

*constant with the breeze  
bending - a slender marsh grass  
restless - a pacing mountain lion  
She reaches to the sun for its warmth  
into the blue sky,  
basking  
Her feet are planted firmly in the earth  
toes curling into its cool softness  
sending up waifs of subtle decay*

*She is proud*

*created with a purpose  
living and breathing  
with not a chance to hate,  
with an instinct for compassion  
yet to defend with dignity  
to maintain a semblance  
of love  
for life  
and to return to the earth,  
when her cycle's complete*

*with not resignation, but satisfaction*

*And I reach out to her  
to embrace her as she  
encompasses the warmth of the sun  
I take her hand  
sinewy and elongated in  
the Mannerist style  
we walk, not speaking  
for she knows not the  
language of civilized men  
nor is it necessary,  
She talks with her body  
its dark beauty and proud stature  
We walk till I'm weary  
She, amused at my addictions,  
food for substance, rest for strength,  
complies  
and keeps watch over my dreams  
protects my oblivion  
indulges in my humanness  
as I bid her good night  
I drift,  
like the blazing sun  
sinking  
into mellow softness*

*In my slumber I feel her kiss*

*a whisper,  
like a tender farewell  
when I awake  
in the soft summer rain  
I can smell the soil  
and think of her  
She is gone*

*To return to the earth  
when her cycle's complete  
not with resignation, but satisfaction*

*She is a part of the earth*

*Suzanne Gosselin*

# A Snowflake's Message

*Snow leaves the sky and dances down  
A corps de ballet resplendent in white,  
Even into night, darkness gleams from the crown  
Of the snow queen and her prince, sprinkling  
dusting through night.*

*Each snowflake spins and its pirouette ends -  
As they blow in a chain one with the other  
The dancers of the night have magically sent  
A snowflake which pantomimes our need for  
each other.*

*But then come the ice and the witch of the storm  
In a piercing attack at enchantment's door;  
And hypnotic beauty that was disappears in the  
morn,  
As people drift, melt away, needing each other  
no more.*

Judie Packer

## Morning

*The sun begins to gleam on these hushed homes,  
Silent streets sleep, a stir, giving life to  
This time of day when peaceful thoughts enter  
While calm and still outside the sill prevails  
Except a robin, maple leaf, a boy  
Who jogs, finding pure gifts in wind and dew.  
Sun rays bring hope and warmth to those it hugs  
A new day dawns in all splendor of life.*

Judie Packer

## Untitled

*The times  
I sit peacefully  
gazing out my window  
waiting to see you  
walk beneath the trees -  
make me cry,  
as the sun turns  
the sky dark  
and the clouds gray.*

*The breeze sends me  
a message  
that your shadow  
won't come tonight,  
and your voice  
won't be heard  
until tomorrow.*

Laurie Jenks

## Untitled

*I open my heart to you  
and you  
wrap your arms around me  
and lie gently  
by my side.  
When we touch  
your love warms me  
and lights  
my emotion  
as we quietly,  
kiss,  
and fall asleep.*

Laurie Jenkins

## Untitled

*In the stillness I share with the earth,  
The wind brings me a song  
That echoes off the mountains,  
And rippling, reflects in the lakes.*

*Laurie Jenks*

## Untitled

*The seaspray  
cools our faces,  
as we warm  
our tender bodies  
in the sun.*

*The sand,  
soft and gentle,  
soothes and relaxes  
our thoughts.*

*As the sun  
goes below the water,  
and the mist  
tingles our feet.*

*Laurie Jenks*

## Progression

*New leaf unfolding  
A promise just begun -  
Carefree, capricious  
Coquettish in the sun.*

*Green leaf blooming  
A splendor on the vine -  
Beckoning, bewitching,  
Bodily devine.*

*Autumn leaf reposing  
Gold and red among the green -  
Retiring, receding  
Reflective and serene.*

*Lone leaf twisting  
Wearily around -  
Desolate, detached  
Decaying on the ground -  
The ultimate finale  
Of all matter  
Of all man?*

*Gladys Heitin*

## A.M.

*Suck.  
The last  
Soap slipped  
Down  
The  
s  
i  
n  
k  
[ ]*

*Bill Littlefield*

## Untitled

*Dive  
into my eyes  
you hope to find proof of longing for another  
hidden well*

*page to page  
as you sit flicking coffee eyes  
in the magazine you've just read*

*silently  
my eyes wander where my fingers long to  
golden thighs  
matted chests*

*Wendy Walsh*

# Prose

## Swansong

by Meg Martin

Sometimes the air smells greener than it does today. The rain left a musty dampness where fresh-cut flower smells usually live. I feel good anyway. I know things are different, quieter. A month from now I'll probably regret what I said. A week from now; tomorrow maybe. But now I feel good.

Ha! My feet are like sausages today! The bones are hiding. Just fat pink sausages where dancers' feet used to be. When we first met, he smoothed a hand over the tops of my feet and said, "They're lovely. Narrow, so perfect. Like dancers' feet." It embarrassed me then, and I quickly pushed his hand away. I remember thinking, "Love can turn gunboats into dancers' feet? Bullshit."

Well, they're sausages today. Take some pamprin and maybe the bones will come back. Most women's breasts swell when they get their period. I get sausages. Sausages and puffy eyes. I always thought I'd be good in a commercial. "Does THAT TIME of the month get you down? That bloated feeling make you resemble a beachball?" (A quick pan from my feet to my head. I smile, but my face is so puffy I look like a blowfish.) "Ladies, have we got what you need! Pamprin, the miracle period de-puffing pill. Pamprin not only relieves those tense and irritable feelings, but it takes care of sausage feet, too!"

He always blamed my tears on my period. Maybe he was right. I could hold the hurt inside for so long. Never showing. Never letting on. But like clockwork, every month I'd have to cry over some silly hurt that, normally, I could have hidden away with all the rest.

He always blamed my tears on something, on anything other than me. I was supposed to be perfect. Untouched. I played the game well for awhile. So aloof. So regal. Nothing ruffled my feathers: the perfect swan. He used to like to watch people look at me as we were walking. I had always been ashamed of my body. Such

large breasts at such a young age had made me resent any kind of stare. But he made me feel so special. Soon, I didn't mind the looks. I began to feel like that swan, beautiful and graceful. And I would stretch my neck to greet the glances. I would never smile though. No one was to know how lovely I felt; it seemed like such a selfish emotion.

How could I explain it when the swan died? Her perfect neck choking on the tears; beautiful snowy feathers trembling in fear. No life left. No grace.

Who was I kidding anyway? Somehow, he could make me believe anything. I used to call him a wizard, and we'd laugh. But it was true. If only he had found a spell to banish my tears, a magic potion to make his caring seem real.

He even possessed the body of a wizard, tempting and mystical. Muscular arms and shoulders pinned to a beautifully hairless chest, his body is a tribute to exercise. My hands would spend hours touring the smooth curves of his sometimes painful back. An injury from a near-miss hockey game all too often brought deep furrows to his tanned forehead and a lazy, bent-shouldered walk so unlike him. An adonis head of dark curls and a nose too large to be perfect, but well-suited for the face. Most times a handsome man-of-secret-dreams face. Sometimes the clean shaven innocence of a college freshman. Working hands with nails chewed down from long hours of nervous worry. Sturdy, peasant feet a Roman sculptor would be proud to claim. A mound of jet pubic hair to run playful fingers through and the most pleasant ass to admire.

He could draw out my deepest emotions. A child at times, he snuggled into my heart with craving, needing desires. And I would respond with gentle mother-love, oozing praise and confessing hidden love. Other times the lover supreme, making me blush at the passion and lust he evoked. I was vulnerable, and he was perfect. Sex was important this time.

When I was lonely, he would come to me. He

would stroke my breasts and my hair and tell me awful jokes. "The most popular item on a Catholic menu is dominos vos biscuits." "Awful stuff," I'd say, but he always made me smile. When he was lonely, he locked his heart from me and coolly swallowed the key.

\* \* \* \* \*

A blue-grey sky with snowball clouds and trees stretching their branches like bony fingers to make spider webs against the sky.

"I won't be able to see you for awhile. I have things I need to do."

I looked at his face, silhouetted by the widening violet sunset. He held my hand loosely, fragilely, as though my fingers were made of glass. "It's O.K.," I said, and ran a hand down his back, letting it rest on his beautiful ass.

"That's all? Just O.K.? Aren't you going to miss me at all?"

It pleased me, his concern. I pulled my hand back to his face and kissed the pouting lips with such force that we fell into the snowbank before us. "I'll miss you more than cyclamates!" I yelled, and the cold was forgotten as we made love and commitments on that frozen bed.

\* \* \* \* \*

I had felt so close that day. So close, that even when I found out about Claudia and Ellen and Fran and Allison, it took a long time to discard his pretty words and his faithless faithfulness.

He didn't believe me at first, when I told him I'd had enough. He was so painfully predictable. "Your period?" he said. "Your arrogance," I said, "and your insensitivity and your lovelessness and your perfectness and if you dare to mention my period one more time I'll ram a tampon up your nose!"

So, I'm not perfect.

"Oh, excuse me, yes, I'd like a box of pamprin please."

I leave my change on the counter and, adjusting my sunglasses and buttoning my trenchcoat, I make a quick exit from the drugstore. He was right, fuck him, I did get my period. But I still mean what I said, and I still feel good today.

## The Dreamer

by Jordan Rich

As daybreak made itself known with the first glimmer of light finding a resting place on the crusty window sill of his room, Joe opened one eye and then the other and decided to close the two and sleep for an extra hour. Sleep was a luxury that Joe seemed to get very little of these days. Perhaps it was the medication and treatments, or maybe it stemmed from the fact that he stayed up too late at night reading. The reading reminded Joe that he needed a new set of batteries for his pocket flashlight. Dr. Bloom would get them for him. Since lights had to be out by nine o'clock, Joe had to use the penlight given to him on his birthday a few months back by one of the nurses. It was one of Joe's most prized possessions. It had said on the box that the flashlight came equipped with a jackknife and bottle opener. Unfortunately, both of these to were missing from the gadget. "The factory must have forgotten to screw them on," thought Joe when he opened his gift on his birthday. The light also came with a ballpoint pen. Even if Joe had reason to use a pen he wouldn't be able to. The ink was dry and solid.

But it didn't matter to Joe if any part of the toy worked except for the light. The only problem with so little light was that it hurt one's eyes. Every night Joe's eyes would be stinging and would tear in a terrible way. But it didn't seem to matter because reading was all too important.

Not that Joe was any kind of intellectual. Not by any means. Rather, he prided himself on being a connoisseur of comic books and picture magazines, especially those dealing with science fiction. For Joe the world of the unknown, of space travel and adventure, offered an escape and a dream like no other.

Once, because he loved science fiction so much, he tried to read through a Tom Swift Adventure story given to him by a friend down the hall, but found that the small print and the lack of pictures made it much too difficult.

Before the television was taken from the room (another factory problem, Joe thought) the only programs he would seriously watch would be Star Trek and the science fiction movies on in the afternoon. As another present on his birthday, Dr. Bloom had arranged for Joe to become a member of the official Star Trek organization. It was such an exciting moment for Joe when he received his pin and membership card that he hugged the youngish doctor and begged to go to the annual convention, choking on every other word as he often did when aroused. The doctor said that he would look into it. What a great day it had been for the fifty-two year old Joe. It was the best birthday he had ever had. How could he ever repay the kindness and warmth shown to him by all of his friends. Dr. Bloom suggested that it would make everyone else happy if Joe would go along with their weird games and tests. Joe agreed and it pleased them all when he took them. The only thing he still felt uncomfortable about were the shots. So many of these terribly long needles.

Joe was shaken out of a grand dream about the planets and the skies by the high, raspy voice of the head nurse on his floor. Joe got out of bed slowly and regretted that the dream wasn't given a chance to finish. In it he was an astronaut just about to embark upon a bold, new planet. Well, the planet could wait until after breakfast.

Joe had taken along several comics and digests to breakfast, and after eating a quick meal of powdered eggs and milk, went with the nurse outside for his daily walk.

While most of the others played games or just walked alone among the trees, Joe wandered over to his favorite tree and sat down. It was early morning and the sun made this summer day especially hot. Under the tree Joe could have privacy and shade. The tree was located near the giant trash bins in the back of one of the administration buildings.

Sometimes he would fall asleep under the tree and forget what time it was. He would often be late for lunch. Then the nurses would scold him and beat him for his tardiness. The gash on his right hand from the last day of punishment had developed a hard scab by now, but Joe was not about to forget the experience. He flipped open

the first book and began to study the pictures.

As the time began to slip by Joe's eyelids grew heavy and swollen, and he wanted nothing more than to nod off and enjoy the restful hours of slumber. The world of Joe was a peaceful one.

The book that Joe had been reading slipped gently from his hands as his mouth slowly opened. He was asleep.

No one ever truly found out the real story about Joe and what he experienced during his nap under the tree. Most of the staff knew of his weird fantasies about flying saucers and little green men.

As the morning walk period ended, the nurse in Joe's area saw an hysterical man running out from behind some trees near the administration offices. His name was Joe he said, and he had just seen THEM. The nurse tried to calm him down and find out what had started him off in such a fashion. Joe was very disheveled, with his hair unkempt and a trickle of spit running down his chin. He tried to talk fast and loud but only garbled his words. The only word he kept screaming after a while was "Them." He wasn't really screaming from fear, but rather from jubilation. That was when the nurse called for the wards who escorted Joe back to his room.

Dr. Bloom was called to Joe's room by the intercom system. He got there in a hurry, and with clipboard in hand tried to deal with Joe, one of his better patients. All that he could get from Joe was that a spaceship had landed with creatures aboard from another world. It had touched down only a few feet in front of him near the administration buildings in the back. Joe could only describe it as being small. He was still very excited. He said that it came down with a crash, waking him out of a deep sleep, and made a dent in the ground. The tiny inhabitants of the ship came out and talked to Joe. In English. He was so stunned and bewildered that he couldn't move. They talked about their planet millions of light years away. They said they would return to visit Joe and others because they liked Joe. He was a peaceful creature. They thanked Joe for his time, boarded the craft and took off in a flash.

It was quite a story, but not one he had not heard before. He was used to hearing Joe and

others like him talk about strange encounters and unexplainable events. Joe asked the doctor if he believed him. The doctor said he would look into the situation and notify the proper authorities if something was out there. He did this to pacify Joe. The doctor's response made Joe jump out of bed and drop to his knees, his hands clutching the doctor's coat strongly. Joe told him that the creatures did not want to hurt anyone, and they did not want anyone to know about their visit except for him. Joe said that he couldn't have kept it to himself because it was so great. But still, he did not want the visitors harmed.

Dr. Bloom led Joe back to his bed and assured him that everything would be all right. As he was leaving, Dr. Bloom gave some instructions to the nurse in the room. Joe faintly heard the words 'heavy' and 'sedation' but thought nothing of them. His thoughts were only directed towards the stars. And besides, he didn't know what sedation was anyway.

With his shift over, Dr. Bloom signed the register and said good night to the head nurse. As he moved toward his car, a funny feeling swept over him and he walked around the building to the back where Joe's dream incident has transpired. He saw the tree which was ordinary with thick green leaves and an old, sturdy bark. Nothing seemed unusual in the twilight of this summer afternoon.

All that stood out at the site were the comics that Joe had left behind when he ran to the nurse. Dr. Bloom bent down and picked up a magazine. Flipping through it he thought of his childhood days. And then he realized what it had done to Joe. "Space Cadets" was the name of the comic book. It had helped to torment a mind that was already confused and grossly immature. The doctor collected all of the magazines and thought about their meaning for a moment. Instead of saving them for Joe, he decided to destroy them. He found a small hole by his foot and threw them in. With his shoe he kicked the freshly turned earth with his foot into the hole, covering the magazines. He then moved a small rock over the resting place. The sun was fading quickly and the stars would soon be dotting the sky. Dr. Bloom walked to his car and rode home in silence.

## No Panacea

by Karen Hunter

The familiar brass bell chimed overhead as Dolores walked through the doorway of her favorite Parisian shop. She absently scanned the racks flush with clothing, as she had done so many times before.

A well-groomed woman of about 50 addressed her fondly. "Good afternoon, Mrs. Black. What can I do for you today?"

"Oh, I would like some new things for the coming winter," she sighed as the music rolled in harmony with her airy voice.

"Well we have a new winter line in, if you'll come this way."

The grays, blacks, browns, and blues blurred in the fine folds of silk and wool; and Dolores selected her garments to suit her mood.

Dolores Black walked toward her car with the packages in her arms, catching gazes from the men on the street. They saw the brown hair bounce off of her delicate shoulders, and her blue dress brush against her slim legs. In her thirty-three years she had had everything. Almost.

When she arrived home the music of Mozart drifted through the French doors of the drawing room. She walked in.

"Hellow, Mark, I'm home," she said, preoccupied with taking her gloves off.

"Angel, I didn't hear you come in. Well, what did you buy for yourself? I didn't expect you so soon," said her husband as he turned the volume down.

"I bought a few dresses, a hat, and oh - I don't know." Her face reddened and she shuddered somewhat under the strain of these words.

"Let me fix you a drink dear, you..."

"Oh Mark," Dolores cried, "It won't help. There is no Panacea! A drink is not the answer, so why is it you always offer one? I'm just BORED, S'ALL. Boared, and miserable."

"But love, how can you be? You have everything: money, beauty, and - me!" he chuckled, though in a half-hearted manner.

"I have everything, yes. But what is it all for? I

shop, attend operas, travel, and spend money. My God, Mark, are these days of a peasant's dreams ever going to end?" Her voice quivered and every nerve in her body was sparked with fear and frustration. "What am I worth?"

"Dolores, I know what you are feeling, but you are worth everything to me. You are my life, isn't that enough for you?" he pleaded.

She quietly spoke, carefully choosing her words, "Oh Mark, I love you. But sometimes, it's not enough."

He swallowed hard and blinked. He looked out of the window passively at the grey clouds over the treetops.

She continued, "What do I know of life compared to a...a...a natural woman? I don't know life! I know nothing of the joys of having a child or seeing the beauty of the forest, for I have always been cooped up within myself and my own importance. But, Mark - I am so insignificant."

"Oh no, babe," he soothed, "you are more than significant. I think that perhaps you should visit Dr. Allenburg."

"No, no, no. I will not fall into the lap of a money hungry shrink who doesn't give a damn about me or my libido, though that's all he talks about. That and my childhood. Can't you see?" she sobbed, "I cannot cope! I can't live like this!"

Mark sat down on the love seat beside his wife, and stroked her hair as she wept into the upholstery. His forehead was lined with concern deeper than in other times in their life. Now he recognized what this crisis meant. His life was her, but hers was only a compromised existence of utter pain and luxury. He became alienated, in order to deal with her.

"Dolores, please get a hold of yourself and see how childish you are being. You are very happy woman and rightly so. What the hell do you want?"

There were no words, she only cried harder.

He continued, "Let's take a trip. I can afford a month away from the practice. Come on now, stop the crying this instant."

"You don't see, do you? I am NOT happy, I never will be happy. I know so because I have tried everything to make me happy, and I am not

happy. I am very unhappy, I don't know what I want, but I don't want THIS!"

He got up and fixed himself a martini. "Do you want one?"

"Yes."

They sat and drank for an hour in the silence of their ambiguous panic and dimness of the settled day. It became dark, and the two figures remained separate in their reflection.

Finally Mark spoke. "Well, when are we leaving?"

"We're not. I am."

He had waited for this, not for an hour but for the entire time he loved her. Some love is so utterly intangible it cannot be possessed, even if held as closely as the love of the Blacks.

He wept soundlessly.

She cried. Not for him: she cried, rather for the both of them, as well as for herself. She could never escape her self-centeredness. It was all she had, all she knew, and all she would walk away with. Marriage is not a bond of a lifetime if the life isn't shared by the two. And as much as she loved him, Dolores couldn't simply exist with an untouchable happiness.

There would be another chance for her, a second coming. The emergence of this had begun - and Dolores thought - "Things fall apart; the center cannot hold."

## Untitled

by Sue Bernard

It was 12:42 a.m. and she still hadn't accomplished anothything. All those big plans for writing two letters, reading that unit and completing that paper sounded very noble and impressive to all those she came in contact with that day. They knew this was nothing new for her...it wasn't surprising for a 4.0 student to talk like that.

But she knew better. It wouldn't be a night of great accomplishments or satisfaction; it'd be just like all the others.

Like always she opened the door to her room and fixed her eyes on her single source of frustration and humiliation. The hope was always there that her eyes wouldn't be able to adjust to the semi-darkness, that just once the light cast by the single candle and the fragile glowing of her roommate's joint wouldn't be enough to distinguish the face. The fact that was looking more animal-like every day.

How long had they been living together? Two months...five...a year? She had tried to convince her family that this would never work.

"But living with your cousin will be so good for her. You'll be such a good influence on her, Dear."

Good soft soap, Mom. Why can't you understand that good-old cousin Janice wants my company about as much as I want hers?

She turned on the light to try to change the atmosphere. That cloudy, dim color turned her stomach. The light wouldn't bother Janice at this point, her eyes were only half open anyway. She was too busy picking at her frizzled hair and carefully calculating how often to take a drag on the inch-long butt.

"Did you make any classes today?"

Christ, she's ahead of schedule. No response and she can't even keep up with the Led Zepplin tune moaning in the background. And wasn't that bottle of "bars" half full this morning? There's only three left now, no doubt she's been at it all day. She's gonna ruin me. It's as if she's using up all my strength. Hate wastes a lot of

energy, you know. How can they expect me to live this way? I'm ashamed to bring anyone over here to see this veg. What would they think? No, I'll do my best not to remind anyone that we share common blood.

God, I can remember the days when they used to say we looked alike. I'd puke if I thought it was true today.

She examined herself carefully in the mirror and tried to avoid noticing the dark circles around her pale blue eyes. Whatever happened to those red cheeks that used to burn with embarrassment every time she was reminded of them? Looks like they took a walk along with her social life the day Janice moved in.

She grabbed her psychology book and plopped down on her bed.

Throw yourself into the books, Kid. It's the only thing left. I hate what she's done to me. She's made me hate everything connected with this room - her desk littered with everything but books, that torn bag of laundry that's been hanging around for weeks, the stereo that resides beside her bed which never has the pleasure of cranking out anything but Zepplin and Bowie. And I'll be damned if I'm going to turn it off. I can't wait to see the speaker burn out or the record wear away under the constant needling.

The words on the page were jumping out at her.

*"Restating the theory: The behavior of society is dictated by the outcasts of that society. In chapter 4 we discussed the psyche of the delinquent. Now let us look at how the rest of society handles and mishandles the problems created by these individuals."*

*"Case one: Reciprocal reaction.*

*"Many individuals who are otherwise socially adjusted may be driven...."*

It's useless; I can't concentrate. She's destroyed my concentration...my determination...my patience, my nerves, my life. What does living mean when all other feelings are shoved out because of the overbearing existence of one emotion? I...CAN'T...STAND IT...ANY MORE.

## Melon Balls

by Meg Martin

"Pass the melon balls, please."

"Pass the melon balls, please."

"May I have the melon balls, please."

"The melon balls. I'd like the melon balls. Please."

"Oh. I thought they were melon balls. I've never seen yellow cherry tomatoes."

"No. No thank you. I don't like tomatoes."

Why did I come here? I am just not good at these things. I thought Aunt Beatrice's funeral was the worst, but this wins. I hate weddings. I should have known better. The bride isn't beautiful. I thought all brides were supposed to be beautiful. It's a law now, isn't it?

**Amendment 242; Chapter 8: All brides are required to meet legal standards of beauty before applying for matrimonial papers.**

And the ceremony...it's enough to make you puke. Little flower girls drooling. The family crying so loudly you'd think John Kennedy had been re-assassinated. Someone choking in the first row. A stomach growl in B flat floating up from the third row. The minister forgot to wear his bottom set of choppers.

"Do you take..."

Jesus, I wouldn't take him if I were starving and he were the last submarine sandwich. Why did I come to this thing?

"She's your cousin. Be happy for her. She's got a nice man."

I figured there'd at least be lots of food here. Well, there's lots of liver pate, chicken salad, pickled watermelon rind and tomato aspic, but no food. Not even any cake; just a plate full of styrofoam pillars and plastic doves.

Why in Hell did I come? Never again. This is the last...

"No thank you. Really, I don't like tomatoes of any kind."

## The Road to Culhane

by John DeJESU

A passionate wind churned drying pine needles at rest in a shaded bed closeby. I pushed myself off the pavement on the side of the road. Cars were fleeting past by making my presence aware seemed secondary. Brushing my hands together I released the flecks of sand and road grit imbedded in the skin. By contouring my pebble pocked palms around her head I ordered her hair into place. She kissed me. I stuck out my thumb. We were going to Culhane.

I told her I was a beginner. If I had not told her this she would have left that very first night. She believed firmly that what we had was new, fresh. I wouldn't have given her remnants of myself or leftover emotion.

The route to Culhane was timeless, slow breathing. We could do nothing but build fertile glances and kiss. The road to Culhane was indeed full of kisses.

Beginnings are always slow; motionless yet keenly aware. The sun was at its five-thirty summer warmest. Yellow-gold everywhere. Beams through trees casted amber on her pigment-like tan. She loved the sun and her skin showed this. Unlike my pallid skin overrun with gleamless hair (unexposed from maternal warnings of sun poisoning) hers was a dark, porous soft congealed by unending rays. She often lay nude.

We made no progress but progress took away time. We waited to get out on the road to touch and smile and sigh. While riding in cars with other people I was forbidden to embrace this dark haired broad breasted orphan who accompanied me. I was always papa and she a growing daughter. It was only out on the sideways that we touched. The open air played messenger with her perfume; the smell of her mouth, her skin exposed to the compounding sunlight. She had a sensual odor, that of a woman. Her breasts appeared swollen with pigment and shadow as I gazed into the fleshy

junction under her workshirt. She danced around hugging me with her arms clasped around my chest. When her vigor subsided she sat cross legged on the green duffle. Still we hadn't moved. No rides yet this time. I was in no hurry.

Her mouth was dirty from an ice cream bar she had pleaded for. She inserted it slowly into her mouth, leaving a chalky brown residual ring around her lips. It embarrassed me to wipe them clean with my handkerchief. Her tongue slid gently into my ear; a thank-you without speaking. Culhane was a long way off and it was only the beginning.

## “Rob’s Apology”

by K. L. Hunter

Robbie gazed out the window at the cold rain as his father called him from the top of the staircase.

“Rob, Robber,” his father nicknamed him Robber as a joke, always saying that he stole his mother’s heart away from his father. “Rob - come on, we’ve got to be out of the house by nine. Get your things together.”

His father spoke of their annual Thanksgiving trip to Maine, a trip that 14 year-old Robert hated. It was the same every year - five days in his Grandmother’s house. There was nothing to do there but hear once again her tired stories of her years working in the British poor houses. He would much rather stay home and finish building his tree house, or go hang around with his friends. His family always got in the way.

He trudged up the stairs and slowly but firmly packed his things. His head was filled with frustrating thoughts, “It’s boring there; I hate lousy turkey; nothing to do, long ride; there’s no reason to go.”

Rob scanned his room with his slate blue eyes, looking for instruments of amusement and diversion from the tedious ride to Maine. He was small for his age, and his golden hair extended slightly below his earlobes. His face, though usually gentle, was now almost contorted with his selfish resentment. His sister hummed in the next room, and Rob gave her a clandestine dirty look through the wall.

His mother popped her head in the room. “Rob dear, I hope you packed your white seater. It gets so cold up there. Let me see what you’ve done so far.” She was smiling, and remained unaware of her son’s bitterness until she saw him purse his lips and roll his eyes.

“What’s wrong?” she asked tiredly.

“Nothin’,” his voice was quick and dull.

“Robber, please not now. If something is the matter - just tell me.”

“I just,” the words rushed out in his anger - “I just hate going to Maine and sitting around all week-end. I hate it there.”

His mother was taken aback, disturbed by his outburst.

“Well,” she said firmly, “we are going. We go there every year, and grandma looks forward to seeing us. Stop being so selfish, think of others for a change.”

“Yeah,” he scowled, “no one thinks about me. ‘Elizabeth’s in there singing cuz she just loves to go up there and see her boyfriend, and you ‘n dad like going there, too, but no one ever thinks of how I feel.”

“Rob, that’s not true. Can’t you see that we rarely get to see Grandma and we miss her. Thanksgiving is a family day. It hurts me to hear you speak so lightly about the people who are closest to you. Some day I hope you know what it is to appreciate people.”

He raised his voice defiantly; she had touched upon a flaw in him he was not yet ready to reconcile with. “No one appreciates ME - I wish I could stay here. I wish I was alone and you weren’t here, so I could do what I want.” He felt his face sting and he saw the hand that slapped him remove itself from his face. His mother walked toward the door and turned before she left.

“You’ve got a lot to learn, Robert, Get your things downstairs. NOW.”

He strained to hear his mother tell of their episode to his father. Tattletale, he thought.

In the car, no one spoke for some time, but silent thoughts slashed out between Rob and his family. He felt no regret for his actions; he just wished his face would cool off and lose its shade of humiliated red.

An hour passed. The click-click of the windshield wipers had dulled the tension in the car, and conversation between his parents and sister began. He began to feel badly about what he had said, and realized how much pain he must have caused his parents. But, he was stubborn and sat with his eyes fixed to the rain-blurred landscape.

He debated with himself, ‘Say you’re sorry; no, don’t. It will do no good. Say it anyway.’ He did love his parents, and knew he was too

wrapped up in his own world. He just didn't know how to remove himself from it, and think solely of others. Too proud to apologize, he stewed in the backseat.

As he stared out the window, he suddenly saw a flaw in the scenery, a tragic flaw. A yellow car from the other side of the highway had jumped the median strip and was headed directly for them.

In the few seconds following, Rob couldn't utter a word; he was speechless to the point of panic. 'Look out' he yelled in his head over and over, but the words couldn't pass through his lips. Everyone else was unaware, and his eyes searched their expressions.

He grabbed his father's shoulder an instant before the two cars ground together. The endless crunch of metal, scraping of steel, and the whine of grating glass fused with the horrified cries of his family. He remained speechless, his mouth open and eyes wide with awe. The din of the collision lasted for so long he thought, that hideous rankling of metal, glass and flesh.

It became silent, all but the periodic whishing of cars passing in the rain. There was no motion in the crumpled car; all was still. Rob convinced himself in his aching numbness that he must be dreaming. Police sirens droned, and the muffled voices of appalled onlookers soon replaced the tranquility. The victims were slowly separated from the vehicle and Rob beheld the covered, limp bodies of his father, his mother, and then his sister being carried away. He was laid out on a stretcher, and the hum of the wet crowd assured him he would live. As he watched his family, stretched out on separate cots he reached out, with pleading fingertips and frantically whispered, "I'm sorry. I'm sorry. I'm sorry, I'm sorry," over and over, again and again until he could no longer distinguish his words from the cars that saged as they passed by.

## The Seven and One-Half Minute Preview

by Gladys Heitin

Her name was Mrs. Baglione, she was a seamstress and one evening last November we shared seven and one-half agonizing moments.

The seamstress came highly recommended by one of the typists in our office. "Mrs. Baglione is patient, efficient - and relatively inexpensive." Excellent qualifications. I further learned, in conversation, that she was thoroughly experienced; she had been a seamstress at Trimont Clothing for two decades. Mrs. Baglione lived off River Street, one block beyond the Square - another plus, since it meant she was within easy driving distance from my home.

I phoned Mrs. Baglione immediately, introduced myself and suggested an appointment for the following night, "say 8:00 o'clock?" "You come in day," was her reply. That was impossible I explained. I did not leave my office until 5:00 o'clock. She was adamant and repeated, "You come in day." My protestations failed to move her. Exasperated, I handed the phone to the typist, beseeching her to act as intermediary. After endless haranguing, the appointment was set for six on the following evening. But with prescribed conditions. I was to ring the bell three times to announce my presence. "She lives alone. You understand." I shrugged my shoulders. Her idiosyncrasies were her concern. I had enough of my own - phobias, too. "One other thing," the typist went on to say, "she asks that you bring matching thread."

At 4:30 the next day, as I was readying to depart, my son phoned and informed me he was still at school; basketball practice. He had missed the last bus. Would I pick him up? This complication meant a detour but, I reasoned as I dashed through the parking lot, at most it would delay me five minutes.

I pulled up in front of the gym; Paul was nowhere in sight. Then out the door flew the youngest of my brood, at seventeen entirely too

tall for his weight, leaping down the stairs, three, four at a time, jacket ballooning behind him in the wind. Shouting, "Hey, Mom, thanks!" he folded into the seat beside me with a thud. I was instantly repelled by his sweaty stench, the grimy shirt and hairy snakes framing his perspiring face and neck.

"Wipe up!" I instructed, tossing some tissues his way. "We're not going directly home." I then explained my appointment with the seamstress and the prior stop that had to be made to purchase some thread.

"Gottch-ya!" he muttered through Kleenex. "Let's go to Mammoth Mart. I need some gear - camping trip - remember?" I had forgotten. Thus it was that while I selected the correct reds and greens and blues in threads, my son found his flashlight, pocketknife, hatchet and string, all of which the girl at check-out haphazardly tossed into one large paper bag and I, in turn, threw into the plastic carry-all containing the slacks, skirts and dresses for the seamstress. I looked at my watch and realized we would be more than five minutes late.

It was 6:30 when we reached River Street. One block to the left we found Tesla, the obscure, dimly lit lane, where Mrs. Baglione lived. The initial search for her house proved unsuccessful; numbers were simply not visible. Paul tore into the Mammoth Mart parcel and produced his newly acquired flashlight - and the pocketknife which somehow had attached itself to the other with a long strip of price-tag adhesive. Paul focused his beam on posts, gates and outside doors. "There it is," he finally said, pointing to a house shaded by a towering oak. I drew up in front of it and parked. Guided by his flashlight, we made our way up the steps to a door. It was locked. Locating the bell system, we indicated our arrival according to direction - once, twice, three times - and waited. Ultimately, a buzzing sound released the lock and we entered the hallway of a typical three-decker. Mrs. Baglione lived on the first floor. I rapped on the door gently. No one answered. I knocked with greater force. Still no response. I listened for footsteps; none were audible. Paul disappeared. He would see if there was a rear door.

"Mrs. Baglione," I called. All was quiet. "It's

me, Mrs. Carlson. Your 6:00 o'clock appointment." It was then I heard the unlocking, unbolting sounds. Subsequently, the door opened to a slit of about one inch, giving view only to a beak and wispy hair; two chains held the door firmly in that position. A high-pitched voice asked, "Who?" I repeated my name and mission. Several more moments of silence, then one chain was released and the door opening expanded to five inches. A thin, bony woman peered at me, blue eyes straining through glasses, studying, evaluating, deciding. Eventually, she unlatched the remaining chain and admitted me. I thought I detected the start of a smile. Then the face froze and paled, the body began to shiver. From the corner of my eye I saw the shadow looming and turned quickly. There he stood, my disheveled six feet-two future Celtics champ, his flashlight tucked under one arm, both hands trying to free tape from a pocketknife. "Mrs. Baglione, he's my son. My son, Paul. Paul, say hello to Mrs. Baglione." The woman, in a state of shock, heard not one word. I thought she was going to faint.

"Paul, go into the kitchen -" and before I could add, get Mrs. Baglione a glass of water, the poor woman began to sputter - "There's nothing in the kitchen. Take what you want here." She paused, then sadly commented, "There's nothing here anyway. They already took it - the bums. They took it all." One foot falling over the other, she made her way to the oval table in front of the sofa and clutched a portrait of a man and two children. Looking up at Paul, who was totally bewildered, her eyes wide and pleading, and in a voice hoarse with fright, she said, "Only don't take this..."

"Mrs. Baglione, please, dear." I sought to put my arms around her, to comfort her. She recoiled. "I am Mrs. Carlson." With forced calmness I struggled to ease the tension. "I want you to alter some of my clothes. See -" And I tore open the carry-all containing the assortment I had brought with me. In my confusion, I further ripped the parcel purchased at Mammoth Mart. Out fell the hatchet and string.

In falsetto, words were screamed incoherently. I suddenly recognized, "Help! Police! They're going to kill me! No, take everything! Go into the

kitchen! Only don't murder me!" She was hysterical and I was beginning to feel cold and clammy. I imagined a scuffling going on overhead. I thought I heard the dialing of a phone. How long before someone would respond, I wondered? The police might arrive at any second! I grabbed my clothes, packages, whatever I had come with and, pushing Paul out the door, ran to where the car was parked. In the street, I took a deep breath and tried to compose myself. I handed Paul the keys to the car.

"Drive."

"Weird woman! Out of sight! Man, what a joke that was!"

"Drive," I said tersely, seating myself. "Drive and not another word, do you hear?"

I leaned back and closed my eyes. Locks and bolts and chains were pounding within my head and against my skull; keys were churning my stomach. Mrs. Baglione's loneliness and hopelessness, the intensity of her fear and torment, transfused themselves to me. I was she, I was one of them, I was all of them, devastated, anguished. A voice within me cried, "Help!"

